

Jim Rex took the oath of office as the state's 16th State Superintendent of Education on January 10, 2007, and immediately went to work fulfilling the promises he made to the people of South Carolina during his successful 2006 campaign. Those include:



- accelerating innovation;
- reforming accountability to ensure its success;
- expanding public school choices for parents and students;
- promoting fair and equitable school funding; and
- elevating and reinvigorating the teaching profession.

In fact, within weeks of taking office, Jim Rex unveiled a sweeping public school choice plan. Though his plan passed the General Assembly with broad, bi-partisan support, it was vetoed by Governor Mark Sanford. Nonetheless, as he continues to oppose vouchers, tax credits, and other schemes that would take money out of our public schools and give it to private schools with no accountability, Rex has made public school choice one of the cornerstones of his administration. He created the first-ever Office of Public School Choice at the State Department of Education and has become a national leader on this issue. His groundbreaking work includes initiatives in single-gender education, as well as the Montessori Method.

In May 2007, Rex unveiled a comprehensive set of recommendations designed to reform and improve the state and federal school accountability systems. In 2008, the Legislature approved his plan to end the PACT test and replace it in 2009 with a new and better test that gives parents, teachers, and students the feedback they need to improve student achievement. The measure also ends the practice of unfair and irresponsible labeling of schools, reduces burdensome and unnecessary paperwork for teachers, and creates a five-year cyclical review of all accountability efforts to ensure that these measures are working and to recommend changes if necessary.

In addition, his accomplishments also include:

- Establishment of a new, statewide Teacher Renewal Center to help give our teachers the opportunity to learn and grow outside the school setting;
- A statewide television ad campaign designed to recruit new people into the teaching profession;
- Creation of an unprecedented collaborative, the Palmetto Priority Schools Project, to address the vast challenges of South Carolina's lowest performing schools;
- Creation of two statewide task forces to address fair and equitable funding for schools;
- Created a new Office of Innovation and Grants inside the State Department of Education to research and implement exciting new reforms that have never been tried; and
- Establishment of a public-private partnership that will deliver as many as 50,000 free laptop computers to schools across the State.

All the while, Rex has toured the state, making good on a promise he made to listen to the people of South Carolina. Through an extensive and ongoing series of town hall meetings in communities across the state, he has met South Carolinians face to face and received their feedback on his ideas and plans.

Jim Rex is a former high school English teacher, football coach, and higher education leader. He served as Dean of Education at Winthrop University, as well as Coastal Carolina University. He is the former President of Columbia College, and a former Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations and Vice President of University Advancement at the University of South Carolina.

In addition, Jim has lent his time and talents to a variety of community organizations, including serving as Chair of Clean Water South Carolina; as a member of the Palmetto Conservation Foundation board of directors; and as chair of the Palmetto Trail. He is also the former chair of the board of the Nurturing Center, a facility created to help abused children.

Jim is a member of Trinity United Methodist Church in Blythewood. He and his wife, Sue, share four children: Adam, Jeff, Nathan, and Siri. They live on Lake Wateree in Fairfield County.